



Neighbors,

It is my pleasure to communicate with you via the March 2012 Ashburn District Newsletter. If you are interested in receiving more frequent updates from my office, please "like" my new Facebook page "Ralph for Loudoun" at: <http://www.facebook.com/RalphforLoudoun>. If you would like to be removed from this distribution list, an unsubscribe link is provided at the end of this message.

#### **FY2013 BUDGET**

In early February and based upon the Board's guidance, the Loudoun County Administrator presented two proposed budgets for Fiscal Year 2013. As during our campaigns, the Board was very clear that we are serious about scrutinizing the budget and lowering the overall tax burden. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to achieve this goal and we have embarked on the necessary path that will lead us there. One of the two proposals would result in no change in the average homeowner's real estate tax bill by decreasing the real property tax rate from \$1.285 to \$1.27 (the "equalized" tax rate). The second proposal would reduce the average real estate tax bill by five percent.

At our first budget work session on 1 March, our first action was to set the baseline budget for discussion purposes at the -5% scenario. The vote was 6-2-1. I voted with the majority. The Board also voted 6-2-1 to apply the -5% reduction to the school budget as well. Let me be clear, we have not made any "cuts" yet, we are simply starting the discussion at this level. We have three plus weeks and as many as 11 budget work sessions ahead to review each department and major budget category. There are programs in the recommended -5% budget scenario that I support restoring and there are other areas that are not included in the County Administrator's proposed budget that I will move to reduce or

eliminate. Stay tuned for more updates. These work sessions, like all other Board meetings, will be televised and are open to the public.

Loudoun provides many valuable services and programs to its citizens, but all of these come at a cost. It is clear to me that some services will need to be reduced or eliminated, especially those that are not core government functions. It is too early in the budget process to know what these reductions will be and I know there will be concerned citizens for every program we must consider reducing or eliminating. Many of those concerned citizens attended the recent Budget Public Hearings and made their opinions known.

### **ZONING**

“Big Box” Ordinance Review: I initiated an action item at the February 14<sup>th</sup> business meeting to reverse the burdensome regulations placed on large retail establishments by the previous Board. We voted unanimously to direct staff to begin the process of reviewing and reversing those regulations. The passage of this ordinance has had a negative impact on our ability to attract commercial businesses to Loudoun and sent the wrong message to the retail industry and to the business community in general. Even with adoption of this new ordinance, there will still be strong review mechanisms in place to ensure that any Big Box developments comply with quality development standards.

### **RAIL TO LOUDOUN**

The Board is anxiously awaiting the delivery of the preliminary engineering study for Phase 2 of the Metro project also known as the Silver Line or “Rail to Loudoun”. This study was conducted by Parsons Brinckerhoff and Aecom and submitted on Wednesday, February 29<sup>th</sup> to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). Once we receive this study from MWAA, we will have 90 days to decide whether to “stay in” or “opt out” of the project. I have long been a proponent of Rail to Loudoun for myriad reasons; however, I am reserving my final support of until I have had a chance to review the overall financial picture, from both a capital investment and long-term operating perspective.

Before giving my final support I also want to ensure that MWAA removes any mandatory mention of a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) from its bid documents including their current bid preference to union-based companies. Virginia is a right to work state and I cannot support any project that provides preference to union labor as it would preclude most Virginia companies and Virginia workers from participating in the project. All I ask is that all bidders be treated equally to

ensure we keep costs to the absolute minimum.

## **ASHBURN DISTRICT UPDATES**

### *Transportation*

**Route 659 (Belmont Ridge Road)/ Route 7:** The first phase of the public process for the construction of the Route 659 (Belmont Ridge Road)/ Route 7 interchange was held on February 23 at Seldon's Landing Elementary. The public input meeting was led by engineering consultant Dewberry. Close to 30 residents posed questions to Dewberry, Loudoun County and VDOT staff during the meeting.

Dozens of residents and other interested community members reviewed design plans and maps, and posed questions to Loudoun County and VDOT staff, as well as Dewberry representatives. This project will reconstruct the current intersection of Route 7 and Belmont Ridge Road to a "single-point, urban interchange", with Belmont Ridge passing over Route 7. Belmont Ridge Road is scheduled to be widened and realigned to four lanes through the intersection with Gloucester Parkway. A shared use trail will run on both sides of the road and continue over the overpass to connect to the Lansdowne community. Stay tuned for updates as this project continues.

**Morley Corner - Waxpool Road/Faulkner Parkway/Unbridled Way:** This project is to design and widen Waxpool Road between Faulkner Parkway and Unbridled Way from two to four lanes. A traffic signal will be installed at the four-way stop currently at Ashburn Village Boulevard and Waxpool Road. The project is being administered by the Loudoun Office of Transportation and Department of Construction and Waste Management. It is fully funded at this time with the estimated cost at \$5.2 million. The design of the project is completed. Right of way plats and deeds of dedication are being prepared. When Right of Way has been obtained, the project will go out to bid and construction is anticipated to begin in the early fall.

### ***New Precincts***

Some of you have received new voter registration cards instructing you to vote at a new location in 2012. Following the county's redistricting process, new precinct boundary lines were drawn in certain cases. The Ashburn District had seven precincts. Two of those precincts, Newton-Lee and Ashburn Farm have been split so there are now nine precincts. These new locations will be in effect for tomorrow's March 6, 2012 Republican Presidential Primary. For more

information, visit the Loudoun County Electoral Board's website at [www.loudoun.gov/vote/](http://www.loudoun.gov/vote/).

### **HS-8**

Now that the due diligence period on the land purchase contract has expired, the hard work of the special exception process begins. And even before that, the schools have been hard at work with residents in Lansdowne to address traffic calming and control concerns. The HS-8 Citizens Committee for Traffic Control and Calming's initial plan was presented by Chris Tacinelli with traffic planning consulting group Gorove/Slade Associates and Sam Adamo of the LCPS Planning and Legislative Services Department on Tuesday, February 28 at Belmont Ridge Middle School. It was made clear that not all of the recommended concepts would be included in the final plan as VDOT needs to review the plan and compare it against their guidelines and regulations. In order for any measures to be enacted, 75% of residents must sign a "Traffic Calming Petition" per VDOT policy. The meeting was productive with new ideas surfacing from residents who were not members of the committee. Next steps include review of the plan by the Loudoun Office of Transportation Services and VDOT as well as the Lansdowne on the Potomac HOA.

### **Announcements & Other News**

**Town Hall Meeting:** School Board Chairman and Ashburn District Representative Eric Hornberger and I will be holding a joint town hall meeting to discuss issues of concern to residents. The tentative date is March 17 at 1 p.m. The venue is TBD. We will send a news alert as soon as a date, time and location are determined.

**Prom Wishes:** The Junior Woman's Club of Loudoun (JWCL) will be holding their annual prom event for all high school girls in the community. Through Prom Wishes, JWCL collects prom dresses and accessories which are then made available at a one-day boutique where the high school girls can select prom attire free of charge. This year's event will take place April 21 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Courtyard Marriott Dulles Town Center. From March 1 to April 7, JWCL will be collecting new or gently used dresses, shoes, purses, jewelry, accessories, and unopened cosmetics. All donations may be left at any Loudoun County Library or at the South Riding Town Hall. For more information please email [promwishes@jwcl.org](mailto:promwishes@jwcl.org).

**Open Burning Restrictions:** The Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office is reminding everyone that open burning is restricted in Loudoun County between February 15 and April 30. Learn more at:

<http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=4049>

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